

## Message Text

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63

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USINT CAIRO

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 8990

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS EGY SY

SUBJ: ISRAELI PERCEPTIONS OF EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN TREATMENT OF POWS

1. NEWS OF RELEASE OF EGYPT OF ISRAELI POW HELD CAPTIVE FOUR YEARS AND OF MURDER OF ISRAELI CPATIVES BY SYRIAN SOLDIERS HAVE PRODUCED QUESTION IN MINDS OF SOME ISRAELIS ON MANNER IN WHICH EGYPT AND SYRIA MAY BE TREATING ISRAELI POW. ISRAELI PRESS WAS INFORMED NOV 5 THAT IDF HAD TURNED OVER EVIDENCE TO ICRC OF TWELVE ISRAELI SOLDIERS HAD BEEN BOUND HAND AND FOOT AND THEN EXECUTED BY RETREATING SYRIAN SOLDIERS. STORIES ABOUT SYRIAN KILLINGS AND MUTILATIONS OF ISRAELI POWS HAVE BEEN IN WIDE BUT PRIVATE CIRCULATION IN ISRAEL, BUT THIS IS FIRST TIME GOI HAS CONFIRMED ONE SUCH STORY TO JOURNALISTS AND HAS ALLOWED IT TO BE PUBLISHED.

2. RELEASE OF CAPT DAN AVIDAR, WHO WAS CAPTURED BY EGYPT  
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ALMOST FOUR YEARS AGO AND ON WHOM ISRAEL HAD EXPENDED

CONSIDERABLE ENERGY TO OBTAIN HIS RELEASE, HAS PRESENTED ISRAELIS WITH A DIFFERENT PICTURE OF HOW EGYPT TREATS ISRAELI POWS. INTERVIEWS WITH AVIDAR WERE CARRIED IN YESTERDAY'S PRESS AS WELL AS ON ISRAELI TELEVISION. IN PRESS INTERVIEWS, AVIDAR PRESENTED HUMANE PICTURE OF HIS EGYPTIAN CAPTORS. HE RELATED STORY, FOR EXAMPLE, OF TWO EGYPTIAN NURSES WHO SPOON FED HIM WHEN HE HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED AFTER HIS CAPTURE, TELLING HIM THAT FOR SAKE OF HIS CHILDREN HE MUST EAT. IN LENGTHY TELEVISION INTERVIEW NOV 5, AVIDAR WENT INTO GREATER DETAIL ABOUT HIS IMPRISONMENT, AND IMPRESSION THAT EGYPTIANS HAD TREATED HIM HUMANELY WAS EVIDENT TO ALL VIEWERS.

3. SOME ISRAELI COMMENTATORS HAVE BEEN UPSET BY MISLEADING IMPRESSION THEY BELIEVE AVIDAR'S INTERVIEWS HAVE GIVEN. THEY BELIEVE THAT WHAT AVIDAR SAID WAS NO DOUBT CORRECT, BUT ONLY HALF THE PICTURE WAS PRESENTED, AND FOR OBVIOUS REASONS THE OTHER HALF COULD NOT BE TOLD. TELEVISION INTERVIEW IN PARTICULAR SHOULD HAVE BEEN SHELVED, THEY BELIEVE, UNTIL FULL STORY COULD BE TOLD, SINCE IT WAS "DISTORTED AND PARTIAL" ACCOUNT AND BECAUSE IT GAVE PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE TO EGYPT.

4. STORY OF SYRIAN ACTIONS CAN ONLY HAVE CONFIRMED WORST FEARS HELD BY ISRAELIS. HOWEVER, AVIDAR'S STATEMENTS HAVE PERHAPS RAISED HOPES THAT EGYPT MIGHT BE TREATING ISRAELI POWS RELATIVELY BETTER. EVEN ON THIS POINT, HOWEVER THERE IS NO WIDESPREAD AGREEMENT. SOME ARE NO DOUBT CONVINCED THAT EGYPTIANS ARE MISTREATING ISRAELI POWS. AS PROOF OF THIS, THEY CITE STATEMENTS CALLING FOR UPRISINGS AGAINST GOI WHICH WE HAVE JUST BEEN TOLD ARE BEING READ BY ISRAELI POWS OVER RADIO CAIRO'S HEBREW LANGUAGE SERVICE LATE AT NIGHT FOR PAST SEVERAL DAYS.

5. COMMENT. SURFACING OF AVIDAR'S STORY LOOKS TO US LIKE GOI EFFORT TO EASE SOMEWHAT THE EXTREMELY EMOTIONAL SITUATION HERE OVER POW PROBLEM. IT HAS BEEN OF ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS, JUDGING FOR EXAMPLE FROM EXTREMIST PLACARDS THAT DEMONSTRATORS IN FRONT OF EMBASSY CARRIED THIS MORNING AND EXTREMIST ADS WHICH CONTINUE TO APPEAR IN PRESS.

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## Message Attributes

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